

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**ATTITUDES TOWARDS LEARNING ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE AMONG FORM
FOUR STUDENTS**

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for the degree of Master of Education
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Abstract

The study seeks to achieve two main aims namely, to determine the students' level of attitudes towards learning ESL and to explore the students' views on their attitudinal motives of learning ESL. The study involved Form Four students of SM Tarat, situated about 20 kilometres from Kuching, the capital city of Sarawak. To assess the students' attitudes, a questionnaire was adapted from Karahan's (2007) Inventory derived from Buschenhofen (1998) comprising 23 items representing 6 main domains: educational and social status of English, social and instrumental value of English, the use of English would detract from cultural identity, orientations towards English, the intrinsic value of English language and English-based culture, and discomfort about Malaysian speaking English. The questionnaire was distributed based on a survey research design, employing a convenience sampling technique to 60 Form 4 students. The questionnaires were returned and analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 17.0 for descriptive statistics. The results indicate that the students' attitudes were generally positive with mean scores within 3.0 for most of the 23 items. The study therefore revealed that Malaysian students to some extent were positive in their attitudes towards learning ESL.

Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the result of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This topic has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any other degree or qualification.

In the event that my thesis be found to violate the conditions mentioned above, I voluntarily waive the right of conferment of my degree and agree to be subjected to the disciplinary rules and regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA.

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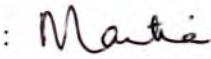
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter provides an overview of the research which includes background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, and scope of the study, its significance, its delimitations and limitations, and finally, the definitions of key terms.

1.1 Background to the study

In the Malaysian context, according to Lee Su Kim (2003), English as a second language (ESL) may be considered with resentment as the language is related to colonialism and hence, that group of Malaysians who view ESL as such might find it difficult to accept it. This kind of attitude towards ESL is damaging because it inhibits students from that group of society to continue learning the language (Norrizan Razali, 1992). According to Candlin and Mercer (2001), students' attitudes towards the target language, its speakers and the learning context may all play some part in explaining their success in learning a language. Numerous studies have been conducted on the role of attitude in second language acquisition, probably spurred by the knowledge that negative attitudes can change. According to Siti Norliana (2008), in Malaysia, students with better attitudes towards reading are those who have a wider variety of reading materials at home. They also have positive influences such as parents and siblings who read, as well as a bigger reading area at home (Ambigapathy Pandian, 2000). However, the above variables also significantly correlate with socio-economic status. Students who come from a higher socio-economic background generally have more reading materials at home compared to students who are from lower income families. From this, perhaps we can hypothesize that learners of a